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COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS: CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

Letter dated 19 June 1997 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the Economic and Social Council

In response to the invitation of the Economic and Social Council set forth in its decision 1988/103 of 5 February 1988, the Committee on Conferences met on 16 June 1997 to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings for 1998 and 1999 in the economic, social and related fields, as contained in document E/1997/L.18. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings and to provide, as appropriate, its recommendations thereon to the Council.

In introducing the provisional calendar, the representative of the Secretariat noted a number of amendments to the calendar. Moreover, he referred to the question of the biennialization of conferences and meetings under paragraph 2 (f) (ii) of Council resolution 1988/77 of 29 July 1988. In that regard, he drew the attention of the Committee to several subsidiary bodies that had been mandated by the Council to annualize their sessions, which was a cause for concern in view of the aforementioned resolution, the limited services available, and the fact that annualization did not result in sessions of shorter duration. The Committee on Conferences again wishes to encourage the Council to continue its consideration of the biennialization of meetings of its subsidiary bodies.

The Committee also wishes to encourage the Council to continue its review of the calendar as a whole in the context of its review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert groups and bodies.

* E/1997/100.

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The Committee on Conferences noted that, in accordance with paragraph 2 (f) (i) of Council resolution 1988/77, the Secretary-General would ensure that meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Council ended at least eight weeks before the session of the Council at which their reports were to be considered. The Committee noted that in the provisional calendar submitted by the Secretary-General, the subsidiary bodies of the Council were, to the extent possible, scheduled to end their 1998-1999 sessions at least eight weeks prior to the scheduled dates for the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

The Committee welcomed the fruitful consultations on improved utilization between its Chairman and the President of the Council. It also welcomed the decision taken by the General Assembly in paragraph 40 of annex I to its resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, whereby the Council reduced its substantive session from five weeks to four weeks.

The Committee on Conferences recommends the adoption of the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Council for 1998-1999 as orally amended by the representative of the Secretariat.

In closing, I should like to express the Committee's appreciation of the Council's invitation to review its draft calendar of conferences and meetings, and of the continued close cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Committee on Conferences.

(Signed) Uldis BLUKIS
Chairman
Committee on Conferences